



**Parks & Recreation and Harbor Commission Meeting
Minutes
August 4, 2015**

Commission Present: Bossange, Hurley, Kaplan, Hanson and Khadka

Staff Present: Bridges, Wood and Putzier

The meeting was convened at 5:38 p.m. by Commission Chair Kaplan.

Approval of Agenda

The agenda was posted at three locations within the City but not on the Department/City website. Move to make non-binding vote on the action items (skate park naming and minutes). Bossange added information regarding a smoking ban as part of the Commissioners items.

Motion was made to approve the agenda as stated above by Kaplan, second by Hurley, motion carried.

Approval of Consent Agenda

Approval of Minutes of June 2, 2015 Meeting

*waive the reading, approve the minutes and place them on file

Motion was made to not approve the consent agenda per request above, due to not being posted on the City website.

Naming of Skateboard Park

The proposal was to name the Skatepark after A-Dog.

Hanson asked about what the public process was for the naming of the Skatepark and Bridges said that this was not the initial hearing and the naming was within the Burlington Parks, Recreation & Waterfront and the Commissions jurisdiction for approval. Bridges also explained that public input was not required since the policy was approved over a year ago.

Motion was made for a non-binding vote by Bossange, second by Khadka and motion carried.

Public Forum (Time Certain 6:00PM, 3 min. per person time limit)

Public forum opened at 5:47 p.m.

Catherine Foley: thanked you for the dog parks, suggested funding could come from private people, felt the Starr Farm dog park was a jewel, brings money to local businesses, in regards to fees, does not believe a fee is necessary, particularly for non-residents. She stated that the park is part of a community and noise is part of being in the community. Park is self-policed and works well, volunteers need to have access to mowing and need support from Parks.



Maureen Schake: asked if the hours of operation were changing for the Starr Farm Dog Park and Bridges responded that there were no proposals to change from 8am to 8pm. Which Schake was happy about.

Erik Monsen: Home is on the bikepath and near the dog park and feels that is an amenity and an added value to his home. Also suggested license fees be collected and used to fund dog parks, instead of charging for use of the park in general.

Rick & Deb Kaigle: Spoke of the noise issue and how there is currently a City Ordinance in place that is sufficient to address that issue. Feels that it is unfair not to be able to smoke where you would like in the City.

Ann Rosenbluth: has dogs and fosters dogs too, feels dog parks are invaluable for socializing dogs including her fosters and was concerned about licensing for foster animals.

Lee Gilbert: Penny for Park could be a source for funding and enlarge it to the bike path. Felt noise is a problem for police because it falls into the City Ordinances.

Chris Stabile: agreed with landscape analysis and planning, also agreed that encouraging dog license to help fund the dog parks. Stated that the Waterfront Park has no shade and not near parking. Does not feel there should be a fee to use.

Jeff Schake: he was motivated by the Seven Days article about people socializing while their dogs run free, and expressed that is the point, stating that is part of the bond with citizens and pets and people want to help.

Steve Taubam and Woody: stated had been showing respect for the neighbors for years by maintaining quiet hours as per City Ordinance, dogs are well-behaved because of the interactions, reflects dog-friendly Burlington and the neighbors and other people take care of it and feels the disturbances and complaints are unsubstantiated.

Joanne Kalisz: thanked for the dog park, stated she was a resident since 2003, always licenses her dogs, had issues with traffic and parking, stating the busiest time is after work, but the parking lot is not filled. Stated that you can use the parking lot next door but most people parking at dog park are using the main park, felt overall need more parking and that after hours parking has nothing to do with dog parks, volunteers do a great job locking the park at closing time, suggested posting signage for parking and in regards to barking complaints said that more dogs bark from houses nearby than the park itself.



Mary Chaffee: was a volunteer, believes it should get bigger with more dog activities and people amenities.

Christine Kucipeck: would like the park to open at 7am, does not want to see the size of the lot cut, felt it was good as is. Asked if the Waterfront Park had closer parking and was fixed in general that people would use it more.

Uta Monsen: owner of Willy Wonka (lab) thankful for the park to socialize her dog and likes the size of the park.

Elizabeth Stanley: is a Vet tech, agrees size of the park is important and shouldn't shrink, dogs need the room to run and breathing room and members of the community support offsetting the costs.

Mary Sisock: one of the reasons she lives in the neighborhood is because of the park, she requests more data on problems and not just hearsay: regarding noise and parking.

Anne Leavitt: having the large park is helpful for dog with anxiety.

Jeanne Lieberman: suggest verify legitimate complaints about noise and traffic.

David Rugh: agree with suggestion to add signage about parking and the variety of people that use the park.

Adrienne Bombard: landlord that offers pet-friendly housing, felt dog parks add value to the community.

Alex Chaffe: entered printed statement into the records. Asked how much it costs to maintain and added that the turf seems to come back, he likes the new trees and would like more, advocate for unfenced area in the City. Asked who the Councilman mentioned in the Seven Days article was.

Gary Barnett: Colchester resident stated the dog park is a good social place and does not want to pay for it.

Beth Brodie: regarding noise said you can hear soccer kids, but cannot hear the dog park, she doesn't take advantage of other amenities and disagrees with idea of charging fees to use.

Marlene Williamson: from Colchester sees the dog parks as a salvation for letting her dog get the exercise it needs, comradery is very powerful and submitted a letter from her friend.



Charlene Johnson: agrees that space is necessary for her dog's activity level, off-leash time very important, if parking is an issue, maybe a gate is needed.

Sharwood Smith: new dog owner, parking is usually from overflow from sports, if considering changing the size, what does City demographics and trends indicate. Suggested cost option to make a foundation to accept donations.

Kaplan stated that the Commission did not write or have any input into the Seven Days article and stated that the Commissions job was to find the balance and welcomed this public process.

Bridges thanked all for the input and said "this was awesome" regarding all the feedback received from the public.

Oktoberfest Event

Bridges provided an update stating many other events as well that are in the works at the Waterfront, including Eat X NE.

Oktoberfest event will include fundraising and family events.

Kaplan asked about sponsorship and Bridges stated that the department did not fund this event and was not a sponsor.

Parks Master Plan

Bridges said mission is to include social spaces and that is what the Department does and to let people know that is a value that will be provided and the spaces will be created. Leadership team has been working on the plan this past week and is getting very close to completing. It has taken two years to produce and has been a very good process, doing in the meantime as we go but thinking of the way in which it is being done. Bridges stated he would email a copy to the Commission and asking for action at the September meeting for approval.

Bridges said that Francis was still editing and Bridges read into the record the message from the Mayor and himself as a reference of what the plan's mission is moving forward. Collaborative is one of the key words that will be working from. The plan is 80 pages, including many maps, photos and text and very powerful. The Plan works on 7 system themes; people, wellness, connection, stewardship, community, service and impact.

Bridges spoke to each of the 7 system themes and gave more in depth information on what the department is doing with each of these themes specifically. For a full copy of the plan you can contact the Parks, Recreation & Waterfront Department.



Bridges continued to speak about areas for improvement and some strategic initiatives and how to move the plan forward and conclusion.

Hanson asked if there were one or three documents to the plan and Bridges stated two documents now, the PLAN and the specific documentation to go along with the plan. Next step is approval of the plan by the Commission, which consists of 80 pages but not a lot of text, deadline in house in next Friday and then will be sending out for edits to Sasaki within the next week and will get back out to the Commission for review.

Commission requested a printed copy be sent for review.

Bridges said the entire survey will be available to the public for review as well.

Bridges introduced Diana Wood as the new marketing and outreach manager for the Department.

Dog Park Update and Request

Bridges explained that an update was posted as requested on a full off-leash workgroup report from 2013, which was directed by the City Council to examine all off-leash policies and it will be posted again. Bridges stated that the Commission did take action and sent the report to the City Council and no action was taken at that time and had been on hold due to the work with the Master Plan. An appendix was proposed and included Starr Farm park and ID's other off-leash opportunities (at parks like Leddy, Oakledge in off-season and Calahan in off-peak). VT has highest percentage of pet owner in the country! Bridges recognized the conflict of using space, in general and need to take into account that parks are in neighborhoods and many people like to recreate with their pets. An off leash task force was created which includes; Parks Planner, Parks Superintendent and Community representation across 7 wards.

Bridges updated memo included an outline of recommendations and included formalization of design. (See memo for details) Side note: dog license fees go to Police Department, charging daily fees has been proposed. It has also been proposed that dog parks are limited to Burlington residents. BPRW opposes that concept as all our parks should be for everyone. Oakledge is the most feasible spot for another dog park.

Hanson asked if everyone had seen the article regarding this in Seven Days and also asked if the Master Plan included changing the size and design of the dog parks, Bridges stated that the Master Plan includes evaluation of the dog park designs, including rotating and also stated that they are four times bigger than most others.

Hanson stated that she was confused about the size comparison and wanted to know where the basis for analysis came from and what the plans are for the dog parks, also asked if any specific fees were



being considered and wanted to make sure the fees did not create a different set of users and unfair criteria.

Bridges explained the soils hydrology and areas make a big impact on the plans, still exploring options for funding and fees , the Master Plan includes standards and analysis for planning and is hoping that exploration and process will address these concerns and funding would be put back into the dog parks.

Burlington College Update

Bossange mad a motion to go into executive session where premature disclosure would put the City at a substantial disadvantage, second by Hanson at 7:40 p.m., motion carried.

Motion to come out of executive session at 8:13 p.m. by Bossange, second by Khadka, motion carried.

Director's Items

Bridges stated that a proposal had been put forward regarding the Cemetery Commission becoming part of the Parks, Recreation & Waterfront Commission. Currently it is looked at as a separate Commission for a division that is all one now and gave some background. The Cemetery Commission is not in favor of this proposal to combine the two commissions. The proposal has been postponed by the City Council until its next meeting. Bridges added this is no different than Harbor Commission.

The department is in conversations with the Maritime Museum to explore a development agreement to bring a Burlington museum in and would like to produce a partnership development including other groups around accessibility and will come to the Commission with a request at the next meeting for approval.

Commissioner's Items

Hanson stated that she had heard several conversations about UVM taking down several trees and Bridges stated that UVM had a signed landscaping plan signed by Planning and Zoning to remove trees and the plans were never seen by the Parks & Recreation Arborist.

Hanson said that she felt UVM was in the wrong here and that there was no acknowledgment of a process and making sure that it was necessary and that the trees would have an adequate replacement and all acknowledged it should have been reviewed by the City Arborist before any action was taken on removal. Hanson stated the department may want to look at proposing an ordinance around this issue and Bridges said there have been conversations around significant trees and felt it would be an adequate or accurate request and would be taking a stronger look at private property. Hanson suggested a short term and long term response might be helpful and suggested putting something on front porch forum, specifically around the UVM tree removal.

Bridges stated that the department never received a copy of the plan for removal of the trees.



Hurley shared that she took a tour of the Moran plant and said it was very interesting.

Bossange stated that he and Kaplan had been researching no-smoking in parks and stated that it gives you a really good idea of what is going on in other Cities and Towns and wanted all to know what they are doing, he also added that he had spoken with the Ordinance Committee and meeting with others when they are back and reachable. Kaplan added that this is at the City Council and has had first reading and working on getting it back for second reading and approval. The intent is to educate and make easy to defend that it is the right thing to do.

Kaplan added that second hand smoke data just came out from the State and there is no safe or good second hand smoke that is acceptable and encouraged all to get the word out.

Khadka asked if anyone had heard anything new on increasing the size of the Commission and all said they had not heard yet and Bridges added that the City Attorney is supposed to draft a proposal for the next election, would need to be voted on etc. as it would be a Charter Change.

Adjournment

Motion was made to adjourn at 8:27 p.m. by Bossange, second by Hurley, motion carried.